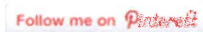


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10.02.2008

Mon Dieu! Jeff Koons Exhibits At Versailles. Images Of All 17 Sculptures & More.



Above: Jeff Koons in front of his "Split-Rocker" (2000) as it graces the famous Palace and Gardens of Versailles.

American Artist Jeff Koons -whose work is being called everything from pop, kitsch.. even zany by the press-- is displaying 17 of his pieces (almost all recent works from the 80s until now) at the Chateau de Versailles (aka Palace of Versailles) from September 10th through December 14th.

The show has been a subject of some controversy. Several dozen people demonstrated outside the palace gates on the opening day, a protest organized by the National Union of Writers of France, a little-known, right-wing group dedicated to artistic purity in France. Others feel that placing the American's works in the French palace is a folly of sorts and the pop art of Mr. Koons has no place in a 'perfectly balanced' building like Versailles.

In addition, there's the potential "conflict" of interest given that six of the 17 pieces are actually owned by billionaire François Pinault who actually employs the show's curator. [More on that here.](#)

In his opening remarks at the news conference, Jean-Jacques Aillagon, the chairman of Versailles and a former French culture minister, defended Versailles against its critics. He called Mr. Koons a "cultivated" artist who treated the artistic history of Versailles with respect, and described the exhibition as "a great cultural event."

Mr. Koons praised the "openness" of France for its decision to exhibit an American artist at Versailles. And he said that he drew his inspiration for his floral sculptures from the "fantasy and control" shown by Louis XIV.

Personally, I find the juxtaposition of the new with the old, the shiny with the antiquated and the preposterous with the traditional to be exhilarating and an effective way to highlight the best of both genres. Koons' work is almost more appealing to me when placed in these settings than when in a more modern and mimimalistic space.

Take a look at the exhibit, curated by Elena Guena and the Pompidou's Laurent Le Bon. I have compiled images of all 17 pieces, so now you can decide what you think:

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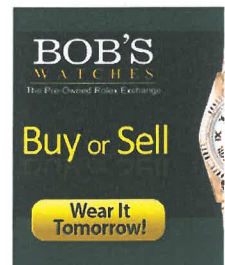
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Above: "Split Rocker" (2000)

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